

## HB 5682

### Statement and Position of the New England Cable & Telecommunications Assn., Inc

Please accept this written testimony on HB 5682 - An Act Concerning High Speed Broadband Access. The New England Cable and Telecommunications Association, Inc. represents the cable telecommunications providers of Connecticut including Cablevision, Comcast, Cox Cable Communications, Charter Communications and Metrocast.

For many years, the cable industry has worked with you - our elected state leaders - to bring the latest in video and digital services to the citizens of Connecticut. Thanks in part to our joint efforts, Connecticut has a great story to tell about broadband. Cable companies entered the market and created consumer-accessible, high-speed broadband in 1997. Just one decade later, more than 95 percent of the state's population has access to broadband provided by cable telecommunications companies. By contrast, only an estimated 79 percent of the population has access to broadband nationally. In short, between cable and other providers, Connecticut has one of the most built-out, competitive and robust broadband systems in the country.

But we're not resting on our laurels, adding more broadband lines and increasing our speeds each year. The cable television industry understands the importance of broadband deployment as an economic development, education and quality of life issue. Through our private investment in broadband, we have positioned CT to succeed and grow.

HB 5682 is about making a very good broadband situation better. As such, this bill should have a relentless focus on the relatively small unserved population. The cable industry stands ready to work with you - state government - to achieve these aims. We are interested in exploring a public-private partnership to provide broadband to the unserved areas of Connecticut. At the same time, we urge and caution you to avoid allowing this bill to become a vehicle that siphons resources away from the unserved communities. It doesn't need to. As previously mentioned, 95 percent of the Connecticut population is not only being served already, but it is being served by a robust market occupied by multiple companies, competing technologies and private sector investment.

We recommend the following changes to HB 5682:

- (1) It must be made clear that governmental efforts be limited to and focused on unserved areas. To do otherwise will siphon scarce resources away from the unserved areas and discourage innovation and risk taking that has served the state so well.
- (2) We support mapping of the state so that one central broadband database exists but the data to be submitted by providers must be limited, clarified and closely guarded. It is crucial that HB 5682 contain strong confidentiality language in order to get the cooperation of all providers.

Thank you for your consideration of NECTA's testimony. We look forward to working with the Committee. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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Paul R. Cianelli, President

DATED: March 3, 2008.